

North Chicago VA News



North Chicago
VA Medical Center
3001 Green Bay Road
North Chicago, Illinois 60064

December 2003

Congressman Kirk Holds Press Conference at NCVAMC

On Monday, November 10th, Congressman Mark Kirk held a press conference at this facility to discuss the future of North Chicago VAMC (NCVAMC) and Naval Hospital Great Lakes (NHGL).

He first announced the move of NHGL's inpatient mental health to North Chicago VAMC. "This will save tax dollars and improve care," says Kirk. He continued by saying, "The next step will be to renovate the operating rooms and emergency area at NCVAMC and once that is complete inpatient medicine and surgery from NHGL can move to NCVAMC. The final step will be the construction of a joint Navy/VA ambulatory care facility that would be built next to the VA hospital."

Kirk went on to say, "Along with the Navy, the Finch University of Health Sciences/The Chicago Medical School is a significant part of the NCVAMC's future. Chicago Medical School residents in psychiatry and medicine train at the VA hospital. Like the Navy, the medical school is adjacent to the VA complex."

The congressman concluded by saying, "You're seeing a renaissance of all three institutions."



Congressman Kirk explains what is planned for the future of NCVAMC & NHGL

Enhanced Use Energy Development and Operation

On Friday, November 14th, a dedication ceremony was held to celebrate the activation of the North Chicago Energy Center. Officials attending the ceremony were from VA Central Office, VISN 12, Navy, Chicago Medical School, the contractor for the project Energy Systems Group and Congressman Mark Kirk.



Claude B. Hutchison, Jr., represented Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi.

An Enhanced-Use lease was executed May 21, 2002 that outleased approximately 1 acre of vacant land on VA grounds to the North Chicago Energy Trust. In exchange for the land lease a private developer, Energy Systems Group, is required to design, construct and

operate an energy center to provide an alternate source of steam and electricity for the North Chicago VA Medical Center. This alternate source will result in significant recurring cost savings for energy over the life of the enhanced-use lease. Through an

Interagency Cross-Servicing Support Agreement with DoD the VA will provide a portion of the energy provided by the Energy Center to Great Lakes Naval Training Center for operation of barracks under construction on VA grounds.

Claude B. Hutchison, Jr., Director, Office of Asset Enterprise Management representing Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi said, "This may mark a new dawn of a new age for the VA and the Navy."

The Energy Center is a new structure comprised of a structural steel frame with pre-cast concrete wall panels. In the near future work will begin to expand the energy



center to increase production for the additional barracks the Navy will be constructing and to provide power to Chicago Medical School.

"This is a great demonstration of public and private sectors working together," said Niel Ellerbrook, President of Evansville, Ind., based Vectren Corporation, parent company of Energy Systems Group.

The VA Resident Engineer for the Project was Todd Sanders.



Tours of the new Energy Center were given after the dedication.

North Chicago News

North Chicago News is published for staff and volunteers of the North Chicago VA Medical Center. Submissions can be sent to douglas.shouse@med.va.gov
Contributors for this issue:

Nancy Gember
EEO Specialist

Georgia Grant
Voluntary Specialist

Shirley Hoffman
VRU

Kenny List
Community Affairs

Charles Mims
Learning Resource
Center

William Morton
Police & Security

William Nielsen
Learning Resource
Center

Sharon Pusateri
OPI

Mary Schindler
Consumer Affairs

Doug Shouse
Executive Assistant

Mary Waterman
Learning Resource
Center

Navy/VA Sharing Expands: 131-3C New Mental Health Unit



Mr. Sullivan along with Captain Anderson, CO of NHGL, have the ceremonial ribbon cutting to officially mark the opening of the unit. Ms. Roseborough, LCDR Kelley and Dr. Sandu of the implementation task force look on.

The ribbon cutting ceremony for the new VA Unit for Navy Mental Health Patients, 131-3C, was held on Monday, October 27, 2003. The unit began admitting patients on Tuesday, 10/28/03. Mr. Charles Robinson, RN, is assigned as the Nurse Manager and Dr. Ioana

Sandu is assigned as the medical provider. Phone extensions for this unit are 85861 and 85862.

Mary T. Roseborough, MSN, Associate Director for Patient/Nursing Services and LCDR Anastasia V. Kelley, Inpatient



Captain Anderson visits with Michelle Tanner, RN and Charles Robinson, RN following the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Division Head, Naval Hospital Great Lakes (NHGL), served as Co-Chairpersons on the VA/DoD Mental Health Implementation Task Group. This task group was made up of both VA staff and NHGL staff who worked together to get this unit up and running in a very short assigned timeframe. This event marks the first step in a major initiative proposed by the CARES project to increase VA/DOD sharing at North Chicago.

JCAHO's - SURVEY 2004

Hospital: 93

Behavioral Health: 97

Long Term Care: 97

Home Care: 93

CONGRATULATIONS ON A JOB WELL DONE

Everyone worked very hard to be sure that everything was in order and looking its very best. Each and every one of you made the difference in achieving our successful scores. When it comes to JCAHO, everyone plays an important part. We all work together to care for our patients, whether you're in a clinical service, support service or administrative service.

The surveyors were very complimentary of our caring, dedicated and competent staff. In fact the surveyors stated they had never seen staff so well prepared and willing to share their success stories. Even before they could ask questions staff was already presenting their storyboards on their performance improvement activities. Again we had no environment of care, or competency assessment, Type recommendations. The Hospital Survey team stated this was the least amount of recommendations given for a Hospital Survey. The surveyors in the tailored areas: Behavioral

Health, Long Term Care and Home Care were equally complementary of the care we provide our veteran patients.

Lets just take a few moments and congratulate each other on a great job. Thanks again for all your hard work. **YOU MADE A DIFFERENCE!!**



1st Annual Performance Improvement Fair 2003



On September 10, 2003 North Chicago VA Medical Center had its 1st Annual Performance Improvement Fair. It was a great success. Over forty performance improvement storyboards were submitted for judging. Four of those were from the Navy.

Awards were given in five categories:

- *VHA Performance Measure and/or Balanced Scorecard
- *Patient Safety
- *Environment of Care
- *Clinical Outcomes
- *Administrative Outcomes
- *Great Lakes Naval Hospital

The judging of the submission occurred on the morning of September 11. The winners were selected based on specific written criteria. The winners were announced at an employee celebration, which occurred following the judging. The winners were:

Surveillance Program
3rd place winner-MDS Quality Indicators

PATIENT SAFETY

1st place winner-Smoking Safety
2nd place winner-Fall Prevention is our Remedy
3rd place winner-Promoting a Restraint Free Environment

CLINICAL OUTCOMES

1st place winner-Care of the Patient on Mechanical Ventilation

2nd place winner-Vital Signs

and Pain Assessment: A routine Part of Mental Health Clinic Patient Encounter

3rd place winner-Pain/Stress Management with Relaxation Therapy in the Psychiatric Population

ENVIRONMENT OF CARE

1st place winner-What's all the Noise About-Clinical Alarm Awareness

ADMINISTRATIVE OUTCOMES

1ST place winner-Electronic Non-formulary Prescription Processing

2nd place winner-Coding Accuracy Initiative

3rd place winner-Mental Health High Risk Alerts.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE

Cardiac Arrest Monitor

GREAT LAKES NAVAL HOSPITAL

1st place winner-Improving Provider Customer Relations Skills Excellence Using Self-Assessment

2nd place winner-Joint Replacement

3rd place winner-Poor Penmanship

It was amazing to see the enthusiasm and healthy competition. It was also very enlightening to see and share all of the PI success stories in our Medical Center. Congratulations to all of you who submitted Performance

Improvement storyboards and congratulations to the winners. You all did a great job.

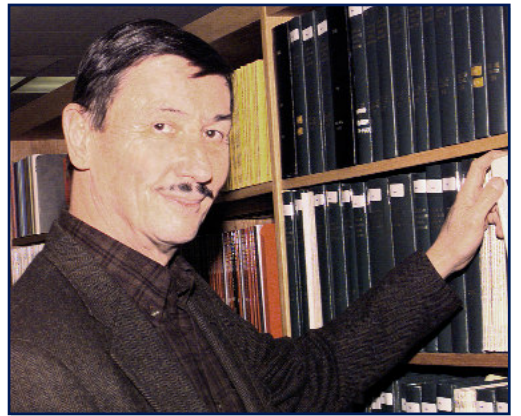


PERFORMANCE MEASURES

BALANCED SCORECARD

1st place winner-Acute Care Note
2nd place winner-Tuberculosis

Dr. Ben Blom Honored by Illinois Psychological Association



Bernhard (Ben)) Blom, PhD has been awarded the prestigious "Outstanding Contribution to Psychology" award by the Illinois Psychological Association. The award recognizes a lifetime of significant contributions to the profession of psychology and the Association. His professional leadership and contributions as teacher/researcher have been exemplary. Dr. Blom has held a variety of positions in national, regional and local psychology organizations. He has served on the graduate faculty of numerous universities including Northwestern University, Webster University, Fuller Theological Seminary and Finch University of the Health Sciences/The Chicago Medical School. He has written many professional articles and served as an investigator on many VA approved research studies.

More importantly, Dr. Blom has served as a mentor and training director to more than 200 graduate psychology interns. Dr. Blom created the full time training program at the North Chicago VA in 1977. He was able to secure the funding and assure that the American Psychological Association accredited the program. As a mentor, Dr. Blom had a way of teaching his students to apply psychology to understand human behavior in a variety of settings. In the words of one of his past students, "I can honestly say that I would not be here today were it not him."

Dr. Blom has been at the VA North Chicago since 1974, he currently serves as the Senior Psychologist, the Acting Associate Leader of Preventive Mental Health Specialty Care and continues to be active as the director of the psychology internship program.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month: *America Works Best When All Americans Work*



In honor of National Employment Disability Awareness Month a medical supply exhibit was displayed in the atrium of Bldg 133. These medical supplies are manufactured or assembled by the blind and other disabled and are purchased by VA Medical Centers. Pictured from left Nancy Antoncew and Kathy Ladewig, co-chairpersons of the EEO disability committee organized the display and dispensed halloween treats and popcorn. Approximately 160 people visited the display.

Pam Devore Selected As Finalist in Nurseweek Nursing Excellence Award for the Midwest Region



Pam Devore, RN, program director of the North Chicago VA's Domiciliary Community Reintegration Program was selected as finalist in the Nurseweek Nursing Excellence Award from the Midwest region.

Pam is the only VA nurse and Illinois nurse to be selected as a finalist in the leadership category. The NurseWeek's 2003 Nursing Excellence Awards spotlighted 51 finalists who represent nursing's "Best of the Best." As a finalist, Pam was selected because of the expertise in her field. The Domiciliary Community Reintegration Program serves veterans with substance abuse or mental health problems. The program is designed to give these veterans a second chance at returning to independent living.

Pam has worked at the North Chicago VA for the past x years. Congratulations Pam!!

Police Training



North Chicago VA Police conducted their 6 month re-qualification at the FBI Range. above is CpL. Lonnie Jeffrey, (Range Master) and new recruit Police Officer Demeturies Jackson breaking in some new equipment at the FBI Shooting Range.

Reservists/National Guard Receive Recognition



Recognition Ceremony On September 22nd, Dr. Joan Cummings VISN 12 Director presented a commemorative pin on behalf of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi to our employees who are in the National Guard, Reserves, or Retired Military. This was to recognize and honor them for their service to our country. Dr. Cummings presented pins to 52 employees, some of who are pictured.

VRU Training: Recovery through Peer Support - Mental Illness From the Inside Out



Moe Armstrong, MA, MBA, nationally acclaimed author and speaker, brought his message of recovery for the seriously mentally ill to VAMC-North Chicago Tuesday, July 22, 2003. Sponsored by the Day Treatment Center/Mental Health Operations, he presented a

one-day workshop entitled: Recovery through Peer Support - Mental Illness From the Inside Out. Mr. Armstrong is of unique importance to the Recovery field because he has experienced and defeated homelessness, substance abuse, and mental illness. He is of unique importance to the VA because he is a combat veteran who served as a medical corpsman in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. To name a few of his affiliations, he is a member of the national NAMI Consumer Council, a member of the President's Commission on Employment for People with Disabilities, and a member of the VHA Mental Health

Consumer Services Council.

Those staff and veterans who attended this workshop learned that those suffering from persistent mental illness are able to return to work and enjoy enriched lives and relationships. Mental health providers are encouraged to work with consumers as peer counselors to achieve these goals and serve as role models for success. If nothing else, everyone discovered that although the road may be a winding one filled with frustrations, there should always be a fulfilling destination in sight. Mental health recovery is indeed a work in progress!

Customer Service Stories

The Customer Service Subcommittee is looking for stories to share throughout the facility on Exceptional Customer Service. If you have a story you would like to share about someone you came into contact with that demonstrated outstanding customer service, either for a veteran or another staff member, please submit to the Customer Service Subcommittee chairperson, Mary Schindler. You can obtain the template to submit your story online on the homepage. There is a link in the dropdown box under "Employee Information" page when it's removed from the home page. Ms. Schindler email address is: mary.Schindler@med.va.gov and is located in Bldg. 133CA, Room 3D-129, mail code 00Q. She can be reached at extension 81482. Upon receipt, the Customer Service Subcommittee will make the necessary arrangements to get the story into the bulletin and will highlight as many as we can in the newsletter. Here are a few we have received so far.

We received a heart-felt letter from Ms. Candice Evans stating that a family member has been ill since June. During this timeframe, the family had encountered Denise Lear, Mildred Taylor; Debbie Colbert; Ruth Peel. These four individuals went above and beyond what was required of them. They took into account the family members emotional needs and assisted them with appointments and giving directions to the clinics. They took the time to help the family as well as show kindness when the family was in a crisis situation. As stated by Ms. Evans letter, "It's so important when someone shows kindness when you are in a crisis. I wish every contact that I have had since his illness was handled as they helped me. Thank you."

It's this type of customer service and personnel that provides a positive reflection on the VA North Chicago

Medical Center. I would also like to thank Candice Evans for taking time out of her schedule to let us know about this experience and recognize these individuals for their exceptional customer service."

We received a letter from a veteran that wanted to recognize an individual that provided exemplary service. The letter reads "This compliment is in regards to Nurse Practitioner, Debbie Saffron. This wonderful person is truly an asset to the North Chicago, VA. Her professionalism and genuine caring for her patients is unparalleled. She follows up on all inquiries, no matter how busy she is. The thoroughness she possesses has truly impressed me. She explains, recommends and even gives you a hug if you need one. If I had the authority, she would be promoted today. She is an example that all the other care givers can follow. She not only is an outstanding professional, she becomes your friend. Thank You Very Much" Congratulations Deb on your display of exceptional customer service because you truly make a difference in the life of a veteran.

On 10/31/03, a patient arrived to get a duplex scan and was found to have an abnormal study. Ms. Karen Zander, who was performing the test, recognized the need for intervention. The patient's primary care physician was on vacation, but that did not stop Karen. Ms. Zander scheduled the patient for a squeeze in appointment, talked to the surgeon, tracked down Dr. Maliekel to explain the situation and obtain the necessary referrals. Ms. Zander is compassionate, efficient, and rose to the level of concerned care that we expect from our VA staff. If Ms. Zander waited for the alert system on CPRS, this patient might have waited until the primary care physician returned which was two weeks later. Great job Karen for going the extra mile to assist our veterans!

The Podiatry Department would like to recognize Ms. Dorothy Harris for her exemplary service and contribution to the care of our patients. Ms. Harris, on numerous occasions, has been a great service to the podiatry department. Dorothy has ensured that all needed instrumentation is prepared for our clinics, and that the used instruments are gathered and sterilized. Dorothy does this task with a cheerful and pleasant attitude, respecting utmost the privacy of our patients as she goes about her work. Ms. Harris has been absolutely indispensable in our more serious surgical cases, in which she saw that all the needed equipment was prepared, sterilized and delivered to the surgical department, even with short notice. Again, Dorothy did this with a cheerful, can-do attitude. Congratulations Dorothy on being recognized by the Podiatry Department for exceptional customer service.

We would like to take this opportunity to give a big thanks to all the food service and kitchen staff involved in the Hospice. These individuals provide exceptional customer service because they will make special provisions when a veteran (patient) requests food that is not on the menu or an item we don't normally provide. Lately, it appears they have received a lot of special requests and have exceeded the veterans expectation. We would like to recognize the fact that this is labor intense to provide and how much patients and families appreciate these efforts. To the average person, it may not make much of a difference, but providing that extra special care has put many smiles on our veterans and their families as well as give the veteran much joy to know that the staff will go that extra mile to care for them. So once again, on behalf of the whole hospice team, veterans and families, thanks and keep up the good work.

Hispanic Heritage Month Observance

The Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration was held on Friday, Sept. 26, 2003. The National 2004 Theme was, "Hispanic Americans: One Culture, Many Races." The guest speaker, Mr. Raymond Salazar, is a Spanish Professor at the College of Lake County. The Dance Troupe "Guadalupano", dressed in authentic clothing,



performed several cultural dances. Attendees were treated to a luncheon consisting of a variety of hispanic dishes. A warm thank you is extended to the members of the Hispanic Committee.



POW/MIA Recognition Day



The P.O.W.- M.I.A. program was held on September 18th in Bourke Hall and featured four former Prisoners of War from World War II. In honor of the occasion, the four POWs shared their experiences and stories of heroism and sacrifice. Pictured from left is James Hoel, Jerome Jans, Chester Pestrak, and Charles Lucas. Mr. Hoel recently had his 1940 Swiss Gallet all-mechanical chronograph watch which he had lost when he was shot down over Holland returned to him. After he was shot down, he was then taken to Stalag Luft 3 where the "Great Escape" took place.

Each year the "Missing Man Table and Honors Ceremony" is held as a symbol that these missing Americans will not be forgotten.

Veterans Day Program



VFW Post #4737 present the colors

This year's program included guest speaker Congressman Mark Kirk. He told the crowd of over 150 that he sees a "bright future" for North Chicago VAMC. Congressman Kirk said, "I will continue to fight for veterans benefits and assure our men and women on active duty are given the resources they need to be successful and safe."

Rosie Elder, Head Nurse of 131-2A sang God Bless America and America.



Congressman Kirk visits with veterans after the program

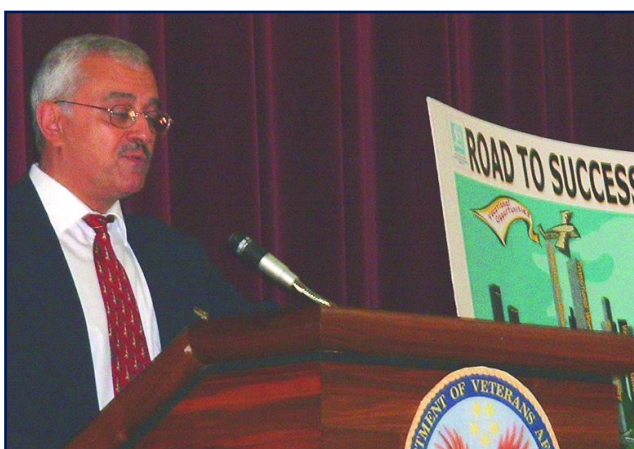
Jack Parcel, Psychology Tech provided a flag ceremony along with a few veterans.

Presentation of Colors was preformed by the VFW Post #4737



Herman Rosenthal, volunteer at North Chicago VAMC wears the colors proudly!

VRU - GLNTC Job Fair Helps Veterans Find Jobs!



Dr. Hassan, NCVA Chief of Staff, welcomes participants of the fair.

and the Great Lakes Fleet & Family Support Center co-sponsored their 5th Annual Employment Job Fair on Wednesday, August 13, 2003. The event took place in Bourke Hall at the VA Medical Center from 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Over 34 employers and community resource agencies attended including Abbott, Baxter, and Medline. The VRU registered 188 veterans

Navy personnel. The mission of the Vocational Rehabilitation Unit is to provide vocational opportunities for veterans so that they might achieve their defined vocational goals. The job fair is but one of the special services offered through participation in the VRU. Other services include: computer skills training, forklift certification, addiction, life skills, and job seeking skills groups, resume writing, and many more. The Vocational Rehabilitation Unit is located in Building 4 across from the Chapel. We are proud of our CARF accredited program!

The Vocational Rehabilitation Unit and Great Lakes registered 126

Advocating For Children Together (ACT) Program at Paul K. Kennedy Child Care Center

On Monday, September 29, a group of legislators, community leaders and board members of various groups spent the morning touring the Paul K. Kennedy Child Care Center. The program was sponsored by the Child Care Coalition of Lake County and our center was selected as a leading example of quality early education and care. Dr. Hassan, acting director greeted the group and explained the PKKCCC was not only the first child care center in the VA system to have been established, back in 1977, but also, was the first of all VA child care center's to become Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 1991.

Visiting legislators included State Senator Terry Link, State Representative Karen May, and

State Representative Elaine Nekritz. Following a brief video produced by Voices of Illinois Children, the group was taken on a tour of PKKCCC by center director, Charlene Ackerman, M.Ed. "It is our third home in 26 years of operation," she explained, and we are so proud of our wonderful facility and dedicated staff.

For more information about the child care center and an opportunity to view the facility, contact Mrs. Ackerman at (847)578-3896. The center accepts infants from 6 weeks of age through Pre-Kindergarten ages and VA employees receive a tuition discount.

"Guardian Angels" Quilt Donated To Hospice Unit



Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Roseborough and Pastor David Dennison pose with children from the Christ Lutheran Church pre-school after donating a quilt to the Hospice Unit.

This "Guardian Angels" quilt was made especially for our veteran patients, with great love, by the children of Christ Lutheran Pre-School in Vernon Hills. It was recently dedicated in a small ceremony and placed on the Hospice Unit. Service Officer, Jim Heir, coordinated the donation and framing of the quilt.



Staff of PKKCCC

Halloween At North Chicago VA



Halloween was celebrated at NCVA with the little ghouls from Paul K. Kennedy Childcare Center coming over in the morning for some tricks and treats. The afternoon was even more creepy as staff took part in a costume and pumpkin decorating contest

Winners include: Funniest - Mimi (Drew Carey Show) Kristina Gonzales; Scariest - (Spike Devil) Maurice Pennick; Most Original - (Medusa) Tanya Ortiz; Best Overall - (Cowboy Vampire) Tim Gackle

Pumpkins: Funniest - (Painted pumpkin) Mike Lavin; Most Original - (Cat pumpkin) Lorraine Donner





North Chicago
VA Medical Center
3001 Green Bay Road
North Chicago, Illinois 60064

Jean Keehn, Named American Legion Auxiliary National Volunteer of the Year



Jean Keehn, VAVS Representative and volunteer for the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) at the North Chicago VA, is this year's American Legion Auxiliary National Volunteer of the Year.

Jean serves as the liaison for the AL Auxiliary and is responsible for the Auxiliary's volunteers and their involvement at our facility. She ensures that they are very active in providing recreational activities for our inpatients year-round that include bingos, picnics, outings, sporting events, pizza parties, ice cream socials, etc. Among her volunteer projects are the Christmas Gift

Shop and coordinating the Poppy Program. Jean provides invaluable services to our patients through donations of comfort supplies, canteen books, snacks, crafts, clothes, TV's, VCR's, DVD's, and special needs items upon request. She is even involved in purchasing computers so veterans can e-mail family and friends or apply for jobs. Jean goes above and beyond to ensure that our women veterans are not forgotten by focusing on their individual needs and making holidays special with visits of small gifts, cards and flowers.

A veteran herself, Jean still answers the call of service. She is here for one reason - to assist our veteran patients! With 12 years of service as a Regularly Scheduled Volunteer, she has logged over 13,800 volunteer hours. Our medical center is grateful to Jean for her loyalty and dedication and congratulate her on receiving this well deserved award!

Bringing Home The Gold And Silver

Irv Czosek, a disabled Army veteran from Libertyville, Illinois, won a Gold Medal in Archery and a Silver Medal for Rifle Shooting at this year's National Wheelchair Games held July 5-9 in Long Beach, CA. He also won Gold Medals in Table Tennis and Nine Ball Billiards and Silver Medals in Bowling and Shuffleboard at the National Golden Age Games, August 7-12 in Bangor ME. The opportunity for Irv to participate with his fellow veterans is through the generosity and continued sponsorship of The Military Order of the Purple Heart. "I have competed in these Games for 14 years and have many enjoyable and memorable acquaintances," said Czosek. With more than 530 athletes from 46 states, Puerto Rico and Great Britain, the Wheelchair Games is the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world. All athletes are military veterans with disabilities. Way to go, Irv!



Mobile MRI

May 23, 2003 marked the first day of MRI procedures being performed on station at VAMC North Chicago. The medical center contracted the mobile MRI unit to come on station one day a week. The unit supports the medical center in providing the best diagnostic tools for our veterans. The unit can perform 15 procedures per visit.

